

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CARACA 08119 161543Z  
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 AID-05 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 FEAE-00 DODE-00  
ERDA-05 SS-15 SP-02 PM-05 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01  
USIA-06 EUR-12 IGA-02 AGRE-00 ISO-00 COME-00  
OMB-01 TRSE-00 /122 W  
-----053896 161620Z /44

P R 161437Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8803  
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 8119

STATE PASS ALSO TO AID/SER/CFS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, PARM, EAID, VE  
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN NUCLEAR PLANNING

REF: (A) 76 CARACAS 14556 (NOTAL)  
(B) STATE 56228 (NOTAL)  
(C) CARACAS 5329 (NOTAL)  
(D) CARACAS 5632 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. NATIONAL NUCLEAR COUNCIL (CONAN) HAS RENEWED ITS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL NUCLEAR PROGRAM. SUCH ASSISTANCE REPORTEDLY ALREADY BEING OFFERED BY FRENCH AND POSSIBLY OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, BUT CONAN OFFICIALS PREFER IF POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE CLOSE TIES WITH USG IN NUCLEAR FIELD. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT REQUEST BE APPROVED IN VERY NEAR FUTURE, OR THAT WE ADVISE CONAN THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE CANNOT BE MADE AVAILABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. MEETING WITH EMBASSY SCIENCE OFFICER AUGUST 11, CAPT. JESUS TABORDA OF NATIONAL NUCLEAR COUNCIL (CONAN) ASKED AGAIN  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 08119 161543Z

FOR US ASSISTANCE IN MAPPING OUT A NATIONAL NUCLEAR PROGRAM FOR VENEZUELA. CONAN NEEDS ASSISTANCE IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF WHAT HE TERMED INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD, INCLUDING WORK PROGRAMS IN AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL AND MEDICAL APPLICATIONS OF NUCLEAR SCIENCE, IMPROVED OPERATION OF THE COUNTRY'S EXISTING RESEARCH REACTOR, AND ADVANCED EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY. ASKED

HOW THIS REQUEST RELATED TO POSSIBLE FUTURE PLANS FOR A NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY, TABORDA EXPLAINED THAT THIS BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE WOULD HAVE TO BE DEVELOPED BEFORE THE COUNTRY COULD EVER SERIOUSLY CONSIDER NUCLEAR POWER.

3. TABORDA SAID THE COUNCIL HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THIS PROJECT, AND IT ONLY REMAINS NOW TO DECIDE TO WHOM THEY WILL TURN FOR THIS ASSISTANCE. HE SAID VARIOUS EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY FRANCE HAVE BEEN VERY PERSISTENT IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SUCH HELP. POINTING TO A HALF-INCH THICK REPORT, HE SAID THE FRENCH HAD ALREADY SUBMITTED A VERY DETAILED AND TECHNICALLY SOUND WORK PROGRAM BASED ON A VISIT BY FRENCH EXPERTS EARLIER IN THE YEAR. THIS REPORT, HE SAID, WOULD BE REVIEWED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL, IN TWO WEEKS, AND HE HAD NO TECHNICAL BASIS ON WHICH TO OPPOSE IT. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, HE INSISTED HE WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE VENEZUELA'S TRADITIONAL COOPERATION WITH THE US IN THIS FIELD, AND INDICATED THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRENCH PROPOSAL MIGHT BE DELAYED IF THE POSSIBILITY OF A US ALTERNATIVE EXISTED. THEREFORE, HE ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY MAKE ONE MORE ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE A TWO OR THREE WEEK VISIT OF A GENERALIST IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD TO ASSIST IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF PLANNING A NATIONAL WORK PROGRAM.

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PAGE 03 CARACA 08119 161543Z

4. COMMENT. TABORDA IS CLEARLY NOT WILLING OR ABLE TO VISIT WAIT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A POSSIBLE GENERAL US-VENEZUELAN AGREEMENT ON ENERGY R&D WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE THE TYPE OF ASSISTANCE DESIRED BY CONAN (REF D). IN THE ABSENCE OF AN EARLY AND RELATIVELY POSITIVE US REPLY TO HIS REQUEST, WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED FROM THAT MADE IN DECEMBER 1976 (REF A) EXCEPT THAT IT IS NO LONGER SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO A NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM, WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT CONAN WILL LOOK TO OTHERS FOR THIS ASSISTANCE.

5. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT OTHERS ARE INTERESTED. IN JUNE, FORMER FRENCH MINISTER PONIATOWSKI WAS HERE AS A SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENT TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL EXCHANGES, AND INCLUDED NUCLEAR ENERGY AS ONE AREA OF SPECIAL INTEREST. LAST MONTH, MINISTER OF ENERGY HERNANDEZ SPENT FOUR DAYS IN GERMANY AS THE GUEST OF THE FRG, WITH COOPERATION IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD REPORTEDLY A PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION. A RETURN VISIT BY A GERMAN GROUP IS EXPECTED IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS TO DISCUSS SPECIFICS OF SUCH COOPERATION. ON THE SAME TRIP, MINISTER HERNANDEZ STOPPED IN LONDON FOR HIS SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE BRITISH ENERGY MINISTER,

WHERE HE AGAIN DISCUSSED POSSIBLE COOPERATION IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD.

6. EMBASSY THEREFORE AGAIN STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT AN APPROPRIATE USG GENERALIST IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD BE SENT TO VENEZUELA UNDER 661 AUTHORITY TO ASSIST CONAN AS REQUESTED IN PARA 2 ABOVE. (SEE ALSO PARA 4 OF REF C). THIS VISIT SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND AS A MINIMUM, THE EMBASSY SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO ADVISE CONAN WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE IS LIKELY TO LEAD TO FOLLOW ON REIMBURSEABLE SERVICES FROM USG AGENCIES, AS WELL AS IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE J.S. PRIVATE SECTOR TO SUPPLY GOODS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 08119 161543Z

AND SERVICES. IF THIS CANNOT BE DONE, WE SEE NO POINT IN ATTEMPTING TO STRING TABORDA ALONG ANY FURTHER, AND REQUEST AUTHORITY TO ADVISE THAT THE USG IS UNABLE TO MEET HIS REQUEST.  
VAKY

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## Message Attributes

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